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CHARITY STATISTICS.

In the *Report of the Committee on Charity Organization*, Mr. Nathaniel S. Rossman, chairman, made at the Seventeenth Conference of Charities and Corrections, May, 1890, criticism is made of the unsatisfactory results obtained in connection with the preparation of the statistical portions of the report. The Report continues as follows:—

“At the Conference of Charities in Buffalo, the representatives of the various societies adopted a blank for the collection of statistics, which was designed to be used by all the societies in the country. Twenty-eight societies agreed to use these blanks, but only eight appear to have lived up to their agreement. With this small result in hand, it is not worth while to attempt any investigation either as to the work of charity organization in general, as to the causes of pauperism, or as to the direct results of charity work. There is a decided need for reliable statistics with regard to the poor and pauperism, and there is no better vehicle for conveying such information than a charity organization society. All of the societies are at work trying to reduce pauperism, and all are succeeding in a measure. But nobody has yet been able to lay down a general rule for work; nobody has yet been able to give general causes for destitution, because reliable figures, covering any considerable portion of our population, have not yet been furnished upon which premises can be based.

“A cardinal principle of scientific charity is to search out causes of distress, in order that work may be begun at the foundation of the trouble. Yet, with all the facilities and opportunities in the hands of the seventy-eight societies in the United States, nothing has ever been given to the economist of sufficient basic value for the study of sources of poverty.

“The blanks as prepared by the New York society, pursuant to the resolution of the meeting at Buffalo, are inexpensive, and the labor of filling them out from week to week is not great; and we urge, with the utmost earnestness, that every society in the country should at once devote its attention to this work, which is by no means the least important it can perform.”